

## ABSTRACT

A buried subsurface pit for use beneath a surface across which aircraft travel for servicing aircraft is provided with a pit latching mechanism for holding and releasing a pit lid mounted atop the buried pit. A shallow latch operating lever storage recess is defined in the upper surface of the pit lid. An actuator rod passageway is formed in the pit lid and extends between the latch operating lever storage recess and the undersurface of the pit lid. A catch is located in alignment with the actuator rod passageway at the undersurface of the pit lid. The catch is mounted for rotation about a horizontal axis of catch rotation. An actuator rod is disposed for longitudinal, reciprocal movement in the actuator rod passageway. A latch operating lever has opposing latch handle and actuator rod engaging ends. The latch operating lever is mounted between its opposing ends to the pit lid proximate the upper surface of the pit lid for rotation on a fulcrum about a horizontal latch operating lever axis of rotation which is located just below the upper surface of the pit lid. The latch operating lever is movable between a stored position in the latch operating lever storage recess and an actuator rod engaging position in which the latch handle end of the latch operating lever is raised out of the latch operating lever storage recess so that the actuator rod operating end of the lever depresses the actuator rod to disengage the catch.